

VZCZCXRO6820
RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHTL #0444/01 1901358
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 091358Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY TALLINN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9976
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TALLINN 000444

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/NB (MICHAEL POLLACK) AND G/TIP (MEGAN HALL)

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EN](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ESTONIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT TIP EFFORTS

REF: TALLINN 132

11. (SBU) Summary. Estonian law enforcement continues to make significant progress in clamping down on prostitution rings operating in Estonia. With new legal tools for investigation and prosecution implemented in Estonia's criminal code to fight trafficking-in-persons (TIP), the police have been successful in infiltrating and breaking up a number of brothels over the last three years. Due to rapid economic growth, rising salaries and a labor shortage, the number of individuals working in commercial sex has also declined. Also, as a result of a USG-sponsored roundtable on TIP, police have begun to reach out to Estonian TIP-NGOs to improve information sharing. While the expanded anti-TIP legislation has been important, Police contacts also concede that TIP-specific legislation might make it easier for them to investigate and prosecute TIP cases. End Summary.

Police Making Progress in Tackling Commercial Sex

12. (U) In November 2003, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) established a special unit within the Estonian police to tackle illegal activities of commercial sex in Estonia. As prostitution is legal in Estonia and pimping is not, this unit's responsibility was to focus on the criminality and organized crime behind commercial sex, without punishing the prostitutes involved. Since its inception, the unit has proven to be highly effective. In 2004, there were an estimated 43 brothels and 70-80 apartments where prostitutes operated. According to Estonian law enforcement statistics and ATOLL, an Estonian NGO working with prostitutes, there are now only four brothels and roughly 30-40 apartments where prostitution takes place.

13. (U) Ardo Ranne, North Police Prefecture Superintendent, told us that prior to 2003, the police lacked the legal tools necessary to do anything more than monitor the brothels. However, according to Ranne, recent additional legal statutes (recommended by the National Action Plan (NAP)) have given police more investigative tools (e.g., wire taps, access to bank records, phone records, tracking internet protocol (IP) addresses, hidden surveillance, etc.). As most commercial sex is advertised on the internet in Estonia, the power to trace IP addresses has been invaluable for the police as pimps now change apartment brothel locations every couple of months. The police were also given the power to investigate and arrest not only the brothel owners, operators, and pimps, but also secondary figures involved in the activity (e.g, bouncers at the brothel, taxi drivers who knowingly deliver clients, etc.) through Estonia's 15 TIP-related legal statutes

(reftel). At the moment, the police have 25 open cases of trafficking-related offenses, 13 of which are under active investigation. Four of these were opened in the last three months. In the last year, the police also conducted 10 raids to shut down apartment brothels (one of which was right next to the Embassy). Ranne said that these extra powers have enabled the police to connect disparate cases and investigations. He cited one example in 2006 of police merging six cases, involving 20 prostitutes, when bank transfers and wire taps revealed that they were all orchestrated by a single individual.

Prostitution Declining in Estonia

¶4. (U) According to ATOLL, the police, and interlocutors from the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), the number of women involved in prostitution in Estonia has declined over the last few years. The police estimate that there are no more than 1000 prostitutes operating in the country. Citing one example, Ranne said that the number of prostitutes working on street corners in all of Estonia has dwindled to less than ten women. Estonian NGOs and GOE agencies agree that the booming economy is the main reason for this decline. Roman Krolov, from ATOLL, explained that due to Estonia's labor shortage wages have risen dramatically so that even unskilled workers with limited Estonian-language skills can find work at decent wages. According to Ranne, the police know of only ten foreign prostitutes (two from Russia, two from Lithuania, and six from Latvia), none of whom they believe are TIP victims. According to ATOLL, compared to what commercial sex workers make in the more affluent Nordic countries,

TALLINN 00000444 002 OF 002

Estonia is still a less attractive destination for prostitutes and foreign gangs as a country of destination.

Persistent Challenges for the Police

¶5. (SBU) Due to Estonia's small size (population of 1.3 million) and the fact that over half of the country's prostitutes operate in Tallinn, Ranne said the primary difficulty police face is not finding prostitution, but linking the money to pimps and organized gangs. Pimps and gangs have become more careful to conceal their involvement. Ranne said this has required more surveillance and undercover intelligence for his unit. One successful method employed by the police is using undercover officers to pose as prostitutes. This work is dangerous and personnel intensive ' because it also requires officers to pose as clients. Ranne said that police resources are starting to be strained in the unit's work to infiltrate prostitution rings. He admitted that TIP-specific legislation could be helpful in reducing the time it takes to build a case. Ranne has had informal discussions with his Ministry of Justice (MOJ) counterparts. However, according to our MOJ interlocutors, there are no plans to submit any TIP-specific legislation to the GOE.

¶6. (SBU) Cooperation between Estonian law enforcement and TIP NGOs continues to be a challenge. At a State-Department funded TIP training conference on May 23-24 for GOE agencies involved in TIP and TIP-related crimes, a dispute broke out between an ATOLL representative and police officers participating in the training conference regarding the lack of information sharing between the two. Police officials were frustrated that ATOLL and other TIP NGOs were not sharing information with police because of concerns about confidentiality. Since the conference, ATOLL, other Estonian NGOs and police

officials have held meetings to discuss how to better cooperate. While they have not resolved the confidentiality issue, Ranne said these initial meetings

SIPDIS

have helped break down suspicions and distrust on both sides. Ranne explained that the difficulty in connecting the gangs and pimps to seemingly independent apartment brothels has led the police to recognize that 'even the most trivial information from NGOs might help fill in missing gaps to close a case or expose an unknown wider prostitution network.'

[17](#). (SBU) Comment. Estonian law enforcement is working hard to close the remaining brothels and organized gangs behind them. More importantly, the police are beginning to recognize the utility in reaching out to NGOs and having TIP-specific legislation. Post will continue to monitor and encourage progress on both fronts.

PHILLIPS